

**PORTER SQUARE / LOWER MASS AVE  
SUMMARY OF REGULATION CHANGES UNDER CONSIDERATION  
JUNE 10, 2004**

***1. Modification of the Development Consultation Threshold***

A Large Project Development Consultation, for which a public meeting is scheduled to receive comments from concerned citizens, is currently required if new development of 6,000 square feet or more is proposed. Elsewhere in Cambridge where such a procedure is also required, the threshold is typically 1,000 to 2,000 square feet. A reduction in the Massachusetts Avenue Overlay District from a 6,000 square foot threshold to 2,000 square feet could be considered.

***2. Retail Uses in the C-2, C-2A, and C-3 Residential Districts***

There are a number of retail and consumer service stores in the residential zoning districts located in the Massachusetts Avenue Overlay District below Wendell Street. Neighborhood residents value those stores, but because they are non-conforming uses in those residential zoning districts, they might be lost should any of their sites be redeveloped to other uses. Therefore, a new provision in the Overlay District may be considered that would allow those retail activities to be reestablished by special permit at their current locations or on other lots within the residential districts should their current sites be redeveloped for housing or institutional uses. An additional public meeting may be held including community members in the Overlay District south of Wendell Street to consider zoning language that would allow retail in this area to be preserved.

***3. Mandated Retail on the Ground Floor***

There is neighborhood concern that institutional or housing expansion along Massachusetts Avenue might result in the displacement of active retail storefronts to the detriment of the retail vitality of the Avenue and to the availability of services to neighborhood residents. Retail activity along the Avenue might be preserved in new development through regulations that would encourage a reasonable range of commercial uses on the ground floor of new buildings regardless of their dominant use, without placing unreasonable burdens on property owners.